

Remarks:

Pending in the application at the time of the outstanding Office Action were claims 1-73. By this response, Applicant hereby cancels claim 1-73 without prejudice and submits a new set of claims. The pending claims are now claims 74-139. No new matter is present. Of these claims, the independent claims are claims 74, 104, 132 and 136. The subject matter of these claims was recently restricted out of related pending application 09/698,502.

By this amendment, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are patentable over the cited references. For example, with reference to independent claims 74 and 104, the cited references fail to disclose, teach or suggest, inter alia, a method/system that permits users to create electronic rental contracts from their reservations, thereby alleviating the user of a need to visit a rental counter to create a rental contract "regardless of whether the user has a pre-existing master rental agreement with the rental car company". Furthermore, with reference to independent claim 132, the cited references fail to disclose, teach or suggest, inter alia, a system that provides users with a website option and a kiosk option for converting rental vehicle reservations into electronic rental contracts. Furthermore, with reference to independent claim 136, the cited references fail to disclose, teach or suggest "displaying, through the kiosk, an electronic rental proposal based on the retrieved reservation data", "receiving, from the user through the kiosk, an electronic acceptance of the displayed rental proposal to thereby create an electronic rental contract, the electronic rental contract permitting the user to avoid creating a rental contract at the rental counter when arriving at the car rental facility to pick up a rental vehicle in accordance with the electronic rental contract" and "storing data representative of the created electronic rental contract", wherein the user is "a user who does not have a pre-existing master rental agreement with the rental car company".

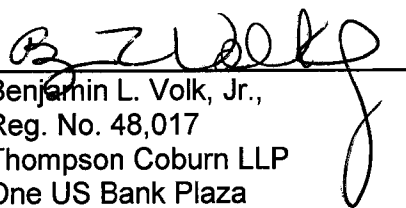
The Hertz and Avis references cited in the Office Action merely relate to reservation booking websites (with no ability to convert reservations into electronic rental contracts), and the Dollar reference merely describes kiosks that permit customers to "make air, hotel and DOLLAR car rental reservations; obtain U.S. weather forecasts, driving directions and event information, access personal Web-based e-mail accounts, as well as receive free Internet access and view the top headline news of the day" (once again with no disclosure by the Dollar reference of electronic rental contract creation functionality). As such, Applicant respectfully submits that

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these claims are patentable over the cited references at least because the cited references do not disclose the combination of features recited in these claims.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,



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